

Frank Harders-Wuthenow

ÉCOLES DE PARIS – PARIS POUR ÉCOLE

Thoughts on a problematic concept of “School”



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of the CD eda 48 École de Paris – Paris pou École

Die The CD production was made in connection with a radio concert broadcast by
Deutschlandfunk Kultur on 6 April 2021 from the Haus des Rundfunks in Berlin on
the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Igor Stravinsky's death.

The programme included:

JACQUES IBERT (1890 – 1962)

Concerto for Violoncello and Winds (1925)

MARCEL MIHALOVICI (1898 – 1985)

Étude en deux parties for piano, winds, celesta and percussion (1951)

GEORGE ANTHEIL (1900 – 1959)

Concerto for chamber orchestra (1932)

SIMON LAKS (1901 – 1983)

Concerto da camera for piano, winds and percussion (1963)

IGOR STRAWINSKY (1882 – 1971)

Octet for winds (1922-23)

ADELE BITTER, violoncello | HOLGER GROSCHOFF, piano

MEMBERS OF THE DEUTSCHES SYMPHONIE-ORCHESTERS BERLIN | JOHANNES ZURL, Conductor



Écoles de Paris – Paris pour École

for Wolfgang Dömling

“If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.”
Ernest Hemingway, 1964

The term “Écoles de Paris” in the sense of a historically and contextually clearly defined designation for an art-historical phenomenon, namely a large group of visual artists of non-French origin, many of them of Eastern European and Jewish descent, who worked in the French capital in the first decades of the twentieth century, is first found in Roger Allard’s review of the 34th “Salon des Indépendants” in the Grand-Palais (February/March 1923) in the *Revue universelle*. What was remarkable about that year’s most important French exhibition of contemporary art was the eschewal of any national or stylistic classification of the more than four thousand works presented – the hanging was in alphabetical order – and with that the renunciation of any assignment to “schools,” and above all of the distinction between “national,” “foreign,” or “international” art. The attendant eschewal of a prioritization of French art production was denounced all the more by the conservative, chauvinistic to xenophobic and anti-Semitic French art critics, in as much as the contemporaneous exhibition organized by the American collector Albert C. Barnes in Philadelphia, in which the American public was to be introduced to the latest trends in French art, aroused international interest. It consisted, however, to a large extent of works by the group, known as the “École de Paris,” of non-French artists resident in Paris, above all of the White Russian-Jewish painter Chaïm Soutine, who had been living in Paris since 1913. André Warnaud’s article “L’École de Paris,” which appeared in January 1925 in the magazine *Comoedia*, was long considered to be the origin of the term. In contrast to Allard, who employed it polemically to distinguish an inferior “barbaric” art from a superior “real French” art, Warnaud used it in a value-neutral way, as an instrument to let the nationality of an artist as a criterion of judgment take a back seat to the importance of the place where art is created.

While art history and the museums have meanwhile researched the phenomenon of the “École de Paris” in its aesthetic, social, and cultural-political dimensions in publications and exhibitions, and Warnaud’s view of a decisive chapter in the art history of the twentieth century, which came to a brutal end in 1940,¹ has become self-evident, musicology

and musical life in general still find it difficult to recognize and acknowledge as music-historical reality an “École de Paris” with the same complexity and seminal influence as it does for this period of art history. Even more problematic: the persistence of thinking in national schools² – whereby the German “school” from Bach to Schoenberg, who, with his invention of composition with twelve tones related only to each other, wanted to secure the “supremacy of German music for the next hundred years,”³ has tacitly been attributed a supranational, “universal” character – blocks out a substantial musical-cultural heritage, whose essence is of transnational nature that defies an unambiguous national attribution. This is aggravated by the fact that in the course of time the labeling of a small group of befriended foreign composers as “École de Paris” became generally accepted – Harsányi, Mihalovici, Martinů, and Beck, who were later associated with Tansman, Tcherepnin, partially also with Spitzmüller and Rieti.⁴ Thus, pushed out of the picture were a large number of composers, who in the sense of the art-historical use of the term, belonged to a musical “École de Paris” in the wider sense. Owing to their exile status, they were considered neither as representatives of French musical culture nor of that of their home countries, and thus fell into the no man’s land of cultural history.

The point of departure of the present production was one of these: Simon Laks. For years, eda records has dedicated itself to his works. His “case” serves as an opportunity to scrutinize the term “École de Paris” and to define it anew and more clearly against the background of the enormous stylistic diversity of the various groups that came together in 1920s Paris, their amicable interrelationships and reciprocal influences partly even beyond the epochal break of 1939–45.

Our title *Écoles de Paris – Paris pour École* refers on the one hand to Federico Lazzaro’s outstanding study *Écoles de Paris en Musique 1920–1950*,⁵ which deals with the topic with impressive documentary and analytical thoroughness, and, on the other hand, to the exhibition “Chagall, Modigliani, Soutine... Paris pour école, 1905–1940,” which could be seen in 2021 in Paris’s Musée d’art et d’histoire du Judaïsme, and in 2022 in the Jewish Museum Berlin (“Paris Magnétique”).

The occasion for the realization of the project – the production and the associated broadcast concert on 6 April 2021, which was recorded under pandemic conditions – was provided by the fiftieth anniversary of Igor Stravinsky’s death. The selection of works – all created in Paris – complied with the orchestration prescribed by Laks’s *Concerto*: winds, percussion and, where appropriate, concertante solo instrument. We would like to take

this opportunity to thank the performers on the recording and the co-production partners – the Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Deutschlandfunk Kultur – for making this project possible. Owing to the excessive length of the program, we decided to extract Stravinsky's *Octet*, a standard work in the wind repertoire and discographically well documented, and make it accessible solely as an online release. The brilliant interpretation by the winds of the DSO can be found on all streaming platforms.

It is ironic that, of all things, the “war horses” on this CD, Stravinsky's *Octet* and Ibert's *Cello Concerto*, flopped at their premieres and were able to establish themselves in concert life only after some time. In the *Octet*, a radical change of style becomes obvious, a style which emerged in different ways already in the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* and in the *Pulcinella* ballet. If in *Pulcinella* the recourse to the musical language of the eighteenth century was directly predetermined by the material borrowed from Pergolesi, then, with the *Octet*, Stravinsky formulated a new style entirely from his own inspiration. Alongside parallel trends in Germany it became as “neoclassicism” the defining style of the 1920s and '30s. The disconcertment the work aroused at its premiere in 1923 was due to the circumstance that neither the audience nor the critics had reckoned with this “new” Stravinsky. Irritating is the departure from the very different, yet always electrifying sound splendor of the ballets *L'Oiseau de feu*, *Petruschka*, and *Le Sacre du Printemps* premiered in Paris before World War I, from the percussive maelstrom of *Noches*, premiered just a few months earlier in July 1923. Gone is the late impressionistic, exuberant rush of color, the rhythmic primal forces of pagan rituals; instead, what remained was sobriety, distance, irony, accentuation of craftsmanship in the adaptation of Baroque and Classical formal models and compositional techniques – a kind of New Objectivity à la russe.

Jacques Ibert

*Of all of our composers, Jacques Ibert certainly represents the French spirit most authentically. He is also the undisputed leader of our contemporary school ... Jacques Ibert's art defies the judgement of time, for in terms of form it is essentially classical.*⁶

Henri Dutilleux, 1945

If Stravinsky is certainly *the* composer of non-French descent who exerted, from Paris, the greatest influence on musical history (after Lully, Rossini, Chopin, Meyerbeer, and Offenbach), then we find in Ibert one of the most successful and – also as a human being – one of the most esteemed French composers of his generation. Even if not officially belonging to any of the many groups that *summa summarum* made up something like the “Écoles de Paris” of the interwar period, he nevertheless played an important role as patron and facilitator. Whereas Stravinsky had already reinvented himself several times by the middle of the 1920s, the some eight-year-younger Ibert stood only at the beginning of a brilliant career. As the 1919 Rome prizewinner, four carefree years in the Villa Medici lay behind him, in which, beside the enchanting one-acter *Persée et Andromède*, works of rather brooding nature, such as *Chant de Folie*, *Féerique*, and above all the *Ballade de la Geôle de Reading* after Oscar Wilde, came into being. In the Cello Concerto, the first work composed after his return, he found his way back to an unadulterated zest for life.

The pastoral mood of the first movement seems to want to carry us off to a bucolic landscape of the eighteenth century. Freely oscillating lines in the woodwinds indulge in worldly G-major and other “bright” sharp keys. After the solo cello’s transition, the second theme enters, a horn solo to be played “joyfully” – the arrival of the hunters? If there is going to be a hunt here, it is certainly not for game, but for the happiness of life. The large arches give way to a dance-like motif of two-sixteenth and two-eighth notes derived from the after-phrase of the hunting theme, taken over by the cello and swiftly inverted, whereby its relation to the first theme becomes obvious. Are we in a transition, in a coda, or in a development? Somehow the orientation seems to have been lost. Whereas the oboe and the cello begin the reprise in the main key of G, the bassoon thinks it is still – or already? – in an entirely different harmonic context, which *peu à peu* throws everybody off balance. A splendid, dramaturgically legitimate use of polytonality, alongside borrowings from folklore and jazz, one of the main stylistic devices of “neoclassicism” that Ibert employs only in specific situations and well considered: “I allow atonality and polytonality under the condition that I not become their victim; that means, not making a

closed system. I employ them when I feel their necessity and their usefulness, but never arbitrarily.”⁷ The second movement, entitled “Romance,” is not so certain whether it would actually rather be a scherzo or at least a capriccio, for everything here is capricious. A rhapsodic, chromatically descending motif in the cello, commented on by the trumpet, speaks of unrequited desire, but the nervous, agitated character of the movement with its constant alternation of caricature-like “apparitions” seems altogether like a nocturnal carnival scene. The middle section, dominated entirely by a large-scale cadenza structured by ritornello-like interjections in the winds, cannot suppress a brief reminiscence of Saint-Saëns’s swan. The concluding Gigue seems baroque only in the title; the frenetic 12/16 whirl that Ibert unleashes here evokes rather the exuberance of an Italian tarantella, just as the whole concerto, although composed in Paris and Normandy, seems like a reminiscence of Ibert’s Italian travels. A music in the wake of Bizet – this could have been Nietzsche’s idea with his dictum “il faut méditerraniser la musique.” The concerto, which was premiered in March 1926 with the cellist Madeleine Monnier, is dedicated to Ibert’s friend Roland-Manuel – one of the most important music critics of the time, Ravel’s biographer and confidant, as ghost-writer later co-author of Stravinsky’s *Poetics of Music* – who, like Ibert, belonged to the closest circle around the “Groupe des Six.” We will encounter him again in the following.

Marcel Mihalovici

*Originally from Romania, Mihalovici sees Paris as his home. In his music, however, he intones songs and develops rhythms whose origins are lost in ancient times and distant lands. And in this is found the real significance of the “École de Paris,” of which Mihalovici is one of the outstanding representatives. This composer ... has created a distinct style in the Parisian atmosphere. This style is perhaps not French, but it is also not Romanian, and it could only have come into being in Paris.*⁸ Tibor Harsányi, 1947

In spite of strong influence by German culture and language in childhood, Mihalovici, born in 1898 in Bucharest, went to Paris in 1919 at the suggestion and with the support of George Enescu. Enescu had recognized the outstanding talent of Mihalovici, who was enthusiastic about Debussy, and, since he was already too old for the conservatoire, provided him with a letter of recommendation to Vincent d’Indy, the director of the Schola Cantorum, with whom Mihalovici then studied until 1925. Thus, Mihalovici found himself in a strange balancing act between the two blocks that defined contemporary Parisian musical life in the second and third decades of the twentieth century: the activities of the So-

ciété Nationale de Musique, headed by d'Indy, and the Société Musicale Indépendante (SMI), founded in 1910 by Ravel, Koechlin, and Florent Schmitt – Enescu's fellow students during his studies with Fauré – in reaction to the conservative spirit of the Société Nationale. Mihalovici became friends with other Romanian artists resident in Paris, such as the sculptor Constantin Brâncuși and the Codreanu sisters – Lizica, the dancer, and Irina, the sculptor, a pupil of Bourdelle and assistant to Brâncuși. In Bourdelle's atelier he met Giacometti, and also the sculptor Maja Stehlin, the later wife of Paul Sacher. An intensive, lifelong friendship would develop from the meeting with the Swiss conductor and patron in 1936 at the legendary 14th Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) in Barcelona. A number of dance-theater projects came into being during the 1920s in collaboration with Lizica Codreanu. Mihalovici experienced performances in concerts of the SMI and the Société Nationale and was promoted by Walter Straram (alias Walther Marrast), who conducted several of his orchestral works at the "Concerts Straram." By the end of the 1920s, Mihalovici was established in the European musical scene; starting in 1930, his works were performed at the festivals of the ISCM.

Mihalovici's affiliation with Harsányi, Beck, and Martinů as a "Groupe des Quatre," from which the idea of an "École de Paris" was developed with further associated foreign composers, stands in close connection with the activities of the publisher Michel Dillard, who in 1928 took over the Éditions de la Sirène, a publishing house founded in 1904 and dedicated to contemporary music, which published, in addition to Satie, Florent Schmitt, and Stravinsky, works also by the "Groupe des Six," and which in 1919 issued their manifesto, Cocteau's *Le Coq et l'Arlequin*. Dillard possibly pursued the propagandistic intention of placing alongside the "Groupe des Six," ten years after their inception, a new group of six, which however was not identical with the six composers later labeled as the "École de Paris." In fact, in the first concert organized by Dillard on 27 April 1929 with composers from his publishing house, works by Jean Cartan and Maurice Jaubert were also on the program along with those of the four already mentioned composers. The term "École de Paris" used with reference to music was to be read for the first time that same year in connection with Dillard and the *Sirène*, which in the meantime had been renamed *Sirène musicale* in order to avoid confusion with the book publisher *La Sirène*. Music journalist Arthur Hoérée employed it in the December 1929 issue of the *Revue musicale* on the occasion of the review of a song cycle by Alexandre Tansman published by the *Sirène*: "La *Sirène musicale* continues its crusade for the ... young music of the 'École de Paris.' That is to say, for the pleiades of remarkable young talents in which French and foreigners who have chosen Paris as their center romp about and participate in its trend, without losing

their national character.”⁹ It should be noted that the term “École de Paris,” here, at the moment of its adoption from the context of the visual arts, put the focus on place and time (“Paris as center,” “young music”), implied foreign and French composers, and – this is significant – did not result in an indiscriminate mixture of styles from the encounter of this wide array of different voices.

The occupation of Paris by German troops in June 1940 meant a dramatic break for the Jewish-born Mihalovici. He fled with the Codreanu sisters to Cannes in the “zone libre,” where he went into hiding until early 1944, and to where his partner, the pianist Monique Haas, followed him. In 1942 Mihalovici and Haas joined the “Comité de Front national de la musique,” a resistance group made up of prominent protagonists of the French music scene, who after the war were to assume decisive functions in the development of post-Vichy musical life. These included Roger Desormière, Henry Barraud, Louis Durey, Georges Auric, Francis Poulenc, Max Rosenthal, and Roland-Manuel, who used Irina Codreanu’s Parisian atelier for secret meetings. After the withdrawal of the Germans and even before the end of the war, Max Rosenthal conducted in November 1944 in Paris the premiere of Mihalovici’s *Symphonie pour les temps présents*, which, written during the war years, was able to be completed, when the situation in Cannes became too dangerous, in a new hiding place, in the house of his friend, the cellist André Huvelin in Mont-Saint-Léger. In 1949 Mihalovici dedicated his *Sonata* for cello solo op. 60 to Huvelin (eda 47, Adele Bitter, “crossroads”).

Mihalovici’s position in French musical life consolidated after World War II. Meanwhile in his late forties, he worked on a regular basis for French radio, was appointed professor at the Schola Cantorum, was a member of important committees and juries, and honored with numerous national awards. In 1963 he was accepted into the Académie des Beaux-Arts of the Institut de France. Alongside this, a parallel, significant career developed in the German-speaking world. In Switzerland, in addition to Paul Sacher, Erich Schmid also became a patron, and in Germany it was the conductors Ferdinand Leitner, Hans Rosbaud, and Heinz Zeebe, who advocated for him. The result of a successful performance of the *Toccata* op. 44 for piano and orchestra, with Monique Haas as soloist and the Southwest-German Radio Orchestra Baden-Baden under Rosbaud, was the contact with Heinrich Strobel, who commissioned Mihalovici to compose a work for the 1951 Donaueschingen Music Festival. Mihalovici proposed to Strobel a piece for five to six winds, and asked him in a letter from November 1950 whether it could perhaps also include a piano.¹⁰ Over the course of the next few months, this basic idea developed into

a veritable concerto for piano with a large wind and percussion instrumentation, which was premiered on 6 October 1951 in Donaueschingen under Rosbaud's direction with Monique Haas. Mihalovici gave the work, dedicated to Strobel, the laconic title *Étude en deux parties*. Did he want to play down with this understatement the fact that he had gone beyond the scope of the commission's dimensions, or did he actually see the work only as a "study"? However, the term is just as little to be underestimated with him as in Chopin or Debussy. The idea of exploration and comprehending that the *étude* implies is an important aspect in Mihalovici's compositional practice of fathoming the potential of musical material. And thus the *Étude* leads us directly to another central pianistic work by the composer, the *Ricercari* for piano solo, written in 1941 in the "exile in exile" in Cannes and likewise expressly for Monique Haas. The second part of the *Étude* takes up the basic rhythmic-thematic idea of the eighth variation ("Allegretto capriccioso, ma molto ritmato") of this cycle, which places itself in the tradition of the *ricercar* genre popular in the Renaissance and Early Baroque and that owes its name to the Italian "ricercare" (i.e., to seek). Even if the *Étude en deux parties* makes horrendous pianistic demands on the soloist, the instrumental virtuosity is in no way paramount. Rather, the search is for balance and inner cohesion of contrasting compositional forms of expression. The first part, *Andantino*, in the character of a calmly flowing *siciliano*, establishes from the outset an asymmetrically constructed twenty-tone theme which, like a genetic code, introduces relevant musical motifs or "building blocks," as we know them in a similar manner from Bartók: the filling in of a minor third by means of a "chromatic return" (analogous to the "reversed" chromaticism of the B-A-C-H theme), followed by a diatonic descending line, an upswing over the major seventh, a chromatic return again, a cadential formula. Everything in this first part happens circumspectly: the melody is developed in broad arches, the tonal space of larger interval steps is successively filled out chromatically, between complete manifestations of the theme are variation-like sections of improvisational character in which thematic material is developed and increasingly also embellished. Early Baroque practice merges here with traditions of Romanian folklore, as we also know from Mihalovici's great role model Enescu. Softly intoned, mildly dissonant five- to seven-tone chordal structures give these contrapuntally woven garlands a harmonic foundation. The "première partie" is divided into three sections, A–B–A', the middle part of which clearly contrasts with the outer sections through the accentuation of the diatonic descending "module" and the eschewal of the presentation of the complete theme. At its vertex, it builds up to a dramatic climax, markedly emphasized by the percussion, in which all the notes of the chromatic total, except for *b*, are heard in a *tutti* chordal agglomeration.

The second part, *Tempo giusto*, complements the first in every respect. Its pent-up energy seems to explode and release elemental, primal forces. The lyrically introverted *legato* changes into an extroverted *staccato*, elegant reticence is followed by wild liberation. The archaic melody that Mihalovici intones here, and the rhythmic energy that he kindles, appear to originate not only from "ancient times and distant countries," but also from a culture that is still linked with the chthonian powers of the earth. Instead of with conventional themes, Mihalovici works with modules, contrasting rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic "figures," which, like the elements of a dramatic mobile, interact in time and space. A sharply dotted first module, taken from the eighth variation of the *Ricercari*, is followed by a chordal structure in a fanlike spread, which Mihalovici allowed to sprout up shortly already in the first section of the first part. Both react to each other and evolve. This is followed by a further module, whose germ likewise comes from the eighth *Ricercar*, a descending scale in a series of whole tones and semitones (Messiaen's "second mode") markedly in the tuba, which is framed by chords in the trumpets and trombones, whose duration becomes shorter and ultimately themselves initials of a sharply profiled rhythmic mini-motif. Now the exposed material experiences a first development, a new section begins with an enchantingly beautiful, "endless" melody, initially intoned in the clarinet, then continued by the solo piano, with which Mihalovici presents us the essence of the folklore of his homeland. It is impressive how he shifts the gravitational fields of the central tones, creates ambivalences between the spaces of tension of the leading tones, lends brilliance to the continually upward striving highest tones of the melody, offsets any metrical restraint through subtle syncopations. At work here is a spirit that succeeds in liberating the melody for contemporary music from the sterile antagonism of tonality versus atonality. The motif at the beginning snaps us out of the dreamlike forlornness of this section like the crack of a whip, but after a short reprise of the opening section, a second transition of the cantilene already follows, this time artfully woven canonically between the piano and trumpet. A breathtaking effect, which later, before the coda, is intensified into magic through the combination of piano and celesta. During the further course of this sonata-rondo, Mihalovici then confronts this first couplet with a second that again seems to carry us off to Romania, this time however to a robust dance scene. If in the richly ornamented lines of the first couplet the intent was to suppress any feeling for the beat, then this rhythmically and metrically clearly structured new melody in a fast $3/8$ time goes right into the legs; the gyro-like ornamentation of the central tone e, with the variable second step (*f/f-sharp*), is literally composed into the frenzy. The vital élan that this dance unfolds infects the entire material in the further course, until the sheer unbridled energy finally discharges in ever new waves of intensification in a large-scale apotheosis.

George Antheil

*Paris – Paris will never, must never, perish. Paris sees only civilizations roll over and past her; she will forever remain the art city. But Europe, the Europe of my youth, it is finished for a long time. Here, then, the last orgies before the flood.*¹¹ George Antheil, 1932

“We entered Paris on June 13, 1923. I remember this date especially, for, many years thereafter, we celebrated it as epochal.”¹² It was the day of the premiere of Stravinsky’s ballet *Les Noces*. Antheil and his wife Boski Markus were invited to the event by Stravinsky, with whom Antheil had become friends in Berlin. And Antheil took this occasion as an opportunity to move the center of his life to Paris for the next ten years. In his memoirs, he described the positive shock that he and Boski experienced at this change of scenery: “We contrasted Paris with Berlin. It was the difference between black night and green tender morning!”¹³ Antheil, born on 8 July 1900, in Trenton, New Jersey, began playing piano at the age of six and possessed a stupendous pianistic technique early on. After completion of his composition studies with Ernest Bloch in New York, he set off in May 1922 for Europe, which he – as he announced to his patroness Mary Louise Curtis Bok – unabashedly wanted to conquer as “enfant terrible,” “noted and notorious ... as a new ultramodern pianist composer.”¹⁴ After a first concert in London’s Wigmore Hall – “I did not conquer London, I merely incensed it”¹⁵ – he attended the Festival for Contemporary Music in Donaueschingen and moved into an apartment in Berlin. As a child of German emigrants, he spoke fluent German – Polish roots, which he cited in his memoirs *Bad Boy of Music*, written in 1945, probably belong, like much of this life narrative, to the realm of invention. Shortly before his relocation to Europe, Antheil had a series of dreams that inspired him to an entirely new kind of music, which he supposedly wrote down in a kind of trance-like state, and in whose apocalyptic variants he later saw a prophecy of the battles of materiel of the forthcoming second world war. The first of these dream compositions, the *Airplane Sonata*, sounds like a ragtime on speed. It was followed in Berlin by further “scandal sonatas” with which Antheil caused a sensation in European concert halls: *Jazz-Sonata*, *Sonata sauvage*, *Death of the Machines*, all only a few minutes in duration. Concerning the last of these, he noted: “Vast amounts of dead and dying machines of some tremendous future war on a battlefield of a final cataclysmic struggle, ruined, overturned, blown to bits.”¹⁶ Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, Antheil’s most important supporter in Germany, through whose initiative Antheil became a member of the November Group in Berlin in February 1923, described Antheil’s performance: “Never had I heard piano playing like this. It was a synthesis of frenzy and precision that went

beyond conventional virtuosity. A machine seemed to be running over the keys. Rhythms of incredible difficulty and complexity were combined. Dynamics and tempi were brought to extremes. The success was superlative.”¹⁷ George und Boski found an apartment directly above Sylvia Beach’s legendary bookshop Shakespeare & Company, the meeting place of the “Lost Generation,” as Gertrude Stein named it, the literary elite of the USA, but also numerous English authors, who had emigrated to Paris, fleeing from recession, prohibition, and political obscurantism. Among Antheil’s circle of friends and acquaintances, including Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway, T. S. Eliot, Ford Madox Ford, and Wyndham Lewis, was also another habitu  of the bookshop, James Joyce, whose *Ulysses* Sylvia Beach had published a year earlier, and, alongside Pound, one of Antheil’s most important advocates in Paris. Antheil saw himself under enormous pressure to succeed. The Parisian establishment craved scandals, and Antheil had the potential to produce them in series. In his first public piano recital on 4 October 1923, in the Th atre des Champs-Elis es as the prelude to the season opening of the Ballets Su dois, in which he played his iconoclastic sonatas, there was a similar tumult as almost exactly ten years earlier in the same hall at the premiere of Stravinsky’s *Sacre du printemps* with the Ballets Russes. Antheil was the man of the hour. In his music, which in its percussiveness and harshness went far beyond Bart k’s and Stravinsky’s “barbarisms,” futurism seemed to manifest itself in contemporary music in a serious way for the first time, albeit with some delay. Antheil labeled himself a futurist, “because certain ground principles of the now pass  Italian futurists were enormously sympathetic”¹⁸ to him. Antheil, who at the age of twenty-two was astonishingly well informed about the currents of Europe’s artistic and literary avant-gardes, identified with their attitudes, mainly in order to distance himself from the current fashions in the wake of Debussy, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky. Seemingly consequent, Antheil collaborated on his major work of the Paris years, the *Ballet m canique*, with Fernand L ger, the machine-loving protagonist of that “splendidly masculine, logical epoch” that emerged from the “impressionistic fog” and “impressionistic softness.”¹⁹ But the proto-fascist right-wing camp affiliated with futurism also considered Antheil as one of its own. Aside from Pound, who in 1924 published an apologetic book about Antheil, commissioned violin sonatas from him for his mistress, the American violinist Olga Rudge, and organized concerts for him, Jacques Benoist-M chin was also enthusiastic about Antheil’s machine music. He was the dedicatee of the first version of the *Ballet m canique* and participated as pianist in the official premiere in Salle Pleyel in 1926.

“The music of the *Ballet m canique* moved him strangely,” recalled Antheil in 1945, “and touched something deep and perhaps terrible within him.”²⁰ Pound as well as Be-

noist-Méchin – later a key figure in the Vichy régime and fervent supporter of Hitler – broke with Antheil when he made a stylistic about-face after the *Ballet mécanique*. He had come as close to his “dream music” as seemed possible to him; thus, as far as he was concerned, the compositional challenge had thus been overcome, and a repetition pointless.²¹ Antheil, through whom the spirit of the times seemed to be channeled as through a medium, also sensed, with the “horror” that his music was able to stir up, the demonic potential of a machine world which would no longer be employed for the benefit and progress of humanity, but rather for its destruction. His political position, however, was unambiguous: back in America, he became involved in the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, which had been founded in 1936. During the Second World War, together with film actress Hedy Lamarr, who had emigrated from Austria, he developed an encryption method based on the idea of frequency hopping for the radio control of torpedoes. He derived it from the punch-tape technology for the preparation of the pianola rolls, which he had the Pleyel piano manufacturing company in Paris produce for his *Ballet mécanique*.²²

While Aaron Copland in 1926 had unenviably praised his compatriot as the greatest talent of young American music,²³ Antheil’s star began to descend with the premiere in Paris of the *Second Piano Concerto* in 1927 and the fiasco of the American premiere of the *Ballet mécanique* at Carnegie Hall in the same year. The media hype surrounding Antheil’s iconoclastic attitude facilitated his rapid breakthrough, but did him lasting harm, since he subsequently failed to satisfy the expectations built up by the piano sonatas, the violin sonatas for Olga Rudge, and the *Ballet mécanique*. He was branded as a Stravinsky epigone. The coming into line with neoclassicism was seen by the critics as a drying up of his talent. The diversity and complexity of his compositional approaches were ignored in the feuilletonistically limited view of their sensational content. What was fascinating about Antheil, however, was precisely the nonchalance with which he reflected in the material of his music the most radical ideas in literature, theater, and the visual arts that were concentrated in Paris in the 1920s. The influence of cubism on his “time-space” concept is something he himself confirmed. His collage technique, his irreverent and witty juggling with musical “objets trouvés” are direct realizations of Dadaistic and surrealistic strategies.

The *Concerto for chamber orchestra*, composed in 1932, occupies a special place in Antheil’s oeuvre. It was his most cohesive, stylistically and formally most balanced work to date. Eschewing all provocations and mannerisms, it brought to completion that which Antheil had worked on in the 1920s in his search for a new temporal order and design. The absurdities and questionableness in terms of taste of his meta-classicism, with which

he intended to overcome (or provoke) French neoclassicism – for example, in the Second String Quartet of 1927 – were discarded. The reference to the new idol Beethoven is manifest only in a strongly sublimated manner in the limitation to the most elementary motivic and rhythmic modules, in the abdication of color with respect to contour – Antheil chose a homogeneous wind ensemble, in the *Symphony for five instruments* of 1923 he still combined the winds with a viola – in a counterpoint completely emancipated from Baroque polyphony, and in the processuality that becomes increasingly manifest in the course of the three cyclically intertwined sections. On the other hand, the idea of music as a sculpture projected into the fourth dimension is fulfilled here, more than in Antheil's other preceding works. Already in 1922, he formulated in a letter to his patroness: "We should find our sense of forms and time-spaces molded by months and months of studying the sculptures of Brâncuși or Lipchitz rather than the architecture, so marvelous in its way, that gave Debussy's music a perfection seldom attained by any master."²⁴

The sculpture that Antheil unfolds before us, or whose shaping we witness from ever new perspectives, is based on the simplest musical elements that are assembled into sharply profiled "figures." With the start in fast 6/8 time, we are thrown into a flow of events whose actual beginning, like after a film cut, could have taken place long ago. A simple phrase in the trumpet presents itself as an Ur-motif: a c that is ornamented twice with the upper and lower diatonic neighboring notes. The clarinet and bassoon accompany sonatina-like with bitonal arpeggiated triads, whereby the respective upper note in the clarinet figure doubles the flute part, an augmentation of the trumpet motif, the ornamentation of b by its upper and lower leading tones. The harshness of the resulting dissonances is mitigated by the rigor of the voice leading and the rapid tempo. The third measure brings a double "Mannheim rocket," an ascending D-major chord in eighth notes in the bassoon and a diminished ninth chord on A in accelerated sixteenth notes in the flute. Both are used time and again as a signal at intersections of the piece. Measure 4 introduces a chromatic sigh figure. In mm. 5–6 the flute executes a melodic plunge which is countered by the bassoon in contrary motion; both parts compensate the somersault through scales in contrary motion. In m. 8, Antheil begins playing with hemiolas with the shifting accentuation from triple to duple eighth-note groups, etc. Antheil's sculpture develops over the first twenty-nine measures through the piecing together of such small and smallest modules, which are related to one another through the principle of antagonism and synthesis. In the further course, it is "modeled" through a virtuoso playing with these modules. There are compressions, elongations, diminutions, cuts, layerings, additions of contrapuntal accompanying voices that can take on a life of their own and, conversely, inventions of seemingly new

motivic-thematic material that later turn out to be a latent secondary voice of melody that has already been introduced. Formal principles of the classical sonata form, such as exposition, bridge, development, recapitulation, coda, etc., shine through again and again without following the structural hierarchy of the historical model. The second section, designated *Larghetto espressivo*, displays neo-baroque attitude with its saraband theme, repeated multiple times, which is gradually supplanted by the concentrated masses of sound of the tutti over a “walking bass,” before the melancholy “subsidiary theme” from the first section concludes this slow middle section. Antheil now takes up the beginning of the first section, as if it were less a third movement than a recapitulation. Ingeniously, elements of the first and second sections are now antithetically confronted and assembled into one another. Antheil intensifies the resulting tension through the “nervousness” of the increasingly embellished inner lines, finally discharges in a hymn-like apotheosis before the movement fades away with the reminiscence of the original motif.

The *Concerto* was written as a commission from the American League of Composers, with whom Antheil apparently had apparently not fallen out with as thoroughly as he contends in *Bad Boy of Music*, because he had turned down its offer for the realization of the *Ballet mécanique* in New York in favor of the agent Donald Friede’s thoroughly unsuccessful Carnegie Hall project. It was dedicated to Claire Reis, the President of the League. Like Mary Louise Curtis Bok, the founder of the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, Antheil’s long-time supporter, she numbered among the outstanding personalities of the musical scene in the USA in the first half of the twentieth century.

Simon Laks

*One sometimes has the impression that the Polish spirit needs the Parisian exile in order to blossom.*²⁵ Alexandre Tansman, 1929

How fatal the narrow understanding of the term “École de Paris” is for the period between the world wars, its reduction to only a good handful of composers of different European provenance becomes especially apparent considering the complete omission of a group of Parisian exile musicians from the discourse: the “Association des jeunes musiciens polonais,” which in its heyday in the early 1930s had some 150 active members, the crème de la crème of contemporary Polish musical life. Founded in 1926 by Szymanowski’s pupil Piotr Perkowski, this society had a special music-historical significance not only because of its size, but also because, unlike all the other groups in interwar Paris, it had a true

structure, with a legal headquarters in the Salle Pleyel. Whereas the majority of young composers resident in Paris were in a constant search of performance opportunities, the Poles had the invaluable advantage of not only having a small concert hall at their disposal in the Salle Pleyel, but also an official venue for meetings and their own office. Simon Laks, who assumed administrative duties in the association soon after his arrival in Paris in 1926, reported in a 1967 interview with the Polish music journal *Ruch Muzyczny* about this chapter of European musical history:

“This society was founded shortly after my arrival in Paris in 1926. Perkowski, Sikorski, Rutkowski, Labuński, Sztompka, Kondracki, and Gradstein were already there by this time. This core continued to grow – therefore the idea of founding an organization. Thanks to Perkowski’s inexhaustible energy and Paderewski’s generosity, this quickly became reality. The place we found for it was not insignificant. These were rather spacious rooms in the newly built Salle Pleyel, which were reserved for us. We were not only able to meet and work there, but also host concerts, which occurred nearly every week. Resident musicians appeared, but also artists who just happened to be sojourning in Paris. They made possible pre-premieres of works composed by members of the society. These concerts, which we called “auditions,” were very popular with the French public, and since they took place regularly for many years until the outbreak of the war, they were an important contribution to the dissemination of Polish music. Thus, the main objective of the association had been achieved.”²⁶

The impetus for this historically presumably singular concentration of musicians from one nation in a foreign cultural metropolis was provided by Karol Szymanowski, who considered it necessary for Polish music to liberate itself from German influence (Wagner, Strauss) after Poland regained national sovereignty in 1918, in order to be able to attain an autonomous world-class national musical culture: “The belief in a universal German music had lived on during the entire nineteenth century. Today, the legend of its universal character belongs to the past, although German music also still remains the richest legacy of the world’s musical culture. Great music can also be created on a different foundation than in the circle of German ‘sensibility.’ The racial characteristics of other national groups must also be raised to the level of the highest musical values. It naturally does not have to do with formal values, but also with the ‘spirit’ of the music, with its deepest substance. For me, living proof of this is French music, where this process has been going on for decades. Just think of Debussy. Can you not hear the new France singing in his work and has his music not been an enrichment of world culture precisely because of this special sound?”²⁷

After completing composition and conducting studies in Warsaw, Simon Laks undertook postgraduate studies at the Paris Conservatoire. His career started promisingly. Through the activities of the Association, contacts with internationally renowned performers were established. His Second String Quartet was in the repertoire of the Quatuor Roth – four Hungarian musicians who played an important role in the circle of the “Écoles de Paris” and went into exile in America together in 1939. The Cello Sonata and the *Trois pièces de concert* were written for two of the leading cellists of the time, Maurice Maréchal and Gérard Hekking. The ties between the Association, the protagonists of the Groupe des Six, and all the other important “players” of the Parisian scene were close. At a competition that the Association held in 1927, only Poles were accepted, whereas the jury was top-class and exclusively French with Maurice Ravel, Albert Roussel, Florent Schmitt, and Arthur Honegger. Laks was awarded a special prize for his *Blues symphonique*, which was lost during the war, as were also a series of songs and chamber music works, including his first two string quartets.

After France’s capitulation, Laks was arrested because of his Jewish descent, interned, and deported to the Auschwitz extermination camp in July 1942. He survived as a violinist and later as director of the men’s orchestra in Birkenau. After the end of the war, he returned to Paris. He bore witness: in a book about the role of music in Auschwitz (1948/1979), later as a witness in the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials. In many of the compositions written after the war, there are, more or less explicit, traces of a coming to terms with what he experienced in Auschwitz and with his survival. Only around 1960 did Laks return for a few years to a kind of compositional normalcy. The working friendship with the Polish singer Halina Szymulska resulted in a corpus of outstanding songs on texts by important Polish lyricists, with which Laks picked up the thread of his Parisian songs from the 1930s. New chamber music works came into being and were well received by French and Polish musicians. Highlights of this phase, marked by acknowledgment and joy of creation, are undoubtedly the First Prize for his Fourth String Quartet at the String Quartet Competition of the Quatuor de Liège in 1962 under the patronage of Queen Elisabeth and the Grand Prize for his *Concerto da camera* for nine winds, percussion, and piano at the International Composition Competition of Divonne-les-Bains in 1964, which experienced its premiere on 28 October 1963 in the Salle Gaveau in Paris as part of the finalists’ concert. The jury was chaired by Louis Aubert, a pupil of Fauré’s, world premiere performer, and dedicatee of Ravel’s *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, a representative of the “old school,” who, by voting for Laks, certainly also made a statement against the then avant-garde. At least, that is the interpretation of Henri Jaton, the music critic of the *Tribune de Lausanne*, who in

his review of the performance of the work at the awards ceremony in Divonne les Bains on 27 June 1964 stated: "Louis Aubert, or at least those of his colleagues who along with him may have made up the majority for the decision, showed great independence. There is no doubt that the places of honor in this kind of competition are [normally] reserved for the avant-garde, whereby the oracles who speak, fear nothing more than to be considered "fuddy-duddies." However, Simon Laks, the new prizewinner from Divonne, had no intention to amaze the bourgeoisie and did not give birth to a five-legged calf....²⁸ Tumultuously applauded by the Divonne audience, he could fortunately convince himself that music today is still able to smile and enchant."²⁹

With his *Concerto da Camera*, Laks not only composed a "sum" of neoclassicism – the dominant style of the era of the 1920s and '30s in Paris, which was formative for him – but also a manifesto for a music whose syntax and grammar corresponded with the listening experiences of a musically educated audience. Not only the three-movement structure – fast, slow, fast movement – traces back to the classical solo concerto, but also the individual movements make reference to the models of sonata form, song form, and sonata rondo established in Viennese classicism. The recourse reaches deep into the musical microstructure, from the design of the themes to the use of typical compositional "models" already formulated during the Baroque. Particularly ravishing is the virtuoso handling of these models in the last movement, whose constituent thematic material is based on the "Pachelbel bass" (fourth downward, second upward, fourth downward, etc.) and the descending scale in the melody whose foundation it forms. Indeed, one cannot suppress a smile at the witty "quarrel" that Laks compositionally provokes when he has the piano stubbornly respond to the major-key formula of the Pachelbel motif in the ensemble with its minor-key variant. And of course, this game is naturally flipped around in the recapitulation. This is musical rhetoric at its best.³⁰

In this third movement of the concerto, Laks quotes from his *Suite polonaise*, which was composed in 1936 and dedicated to Szymanowski – it is a Polish folk-song melody. With this, Laks forges a bridge to the pre-war period: with the *Suite polonaise* for violin and piano, he represented the Polish section at the Festival of the International Society for New Music in 1937 – in addition to his successes as a composer for Polish sound film, a milestone on the way to the international music scene. Thus, in a later, compositionally fruitful phase of his life, he also reiterated his acknowledgment of the most important figure in Polish music in the first half of the twentieth century and, as a Parisian by choice, affirmed his roots in the music of his homeland. However, in addition to Szymanowski, also open-

ly apparent is the formative influence of French aesthetics and, above all in the second movement, Laks's admiration for Ravel's refined neoclassicism.

Toward the end of the 1960s, Laks fell silent as a composer. According to his own admission, this was mainly in reaction to the Six-Day War and the state-directed anti-Semitism of the communist government in Poland. But he was also conscious that his music hardly had any chance in the European music scene, which was meanwhile dominated by serialism and post-serialism. Particularly frustrating for him was the fate of his opera for which no French stage had any interest: *L'Hirondelle inattendue* (The Unexpected Swallow), an opéra bouffe with an existential-philosophical background in which a famous French chanson plays the leading role, a unique document not only of coming to terms with the Holocaust,³¹ but also of a European cultural symbiosis that did not survive the Nationalist-National Socialist terror.

The Great Song of Paris

*Paris knows how to give artists a fantastic sense of balance, clarity, and finesse without ever taking away what they have of their own.*³² Alexandre Tansman, 1967

The use of the term "École de Paris" to define a clearly delineated, small group of foreign composers, who worked in Paris in the 1920s and '30s, is, as we have seen, problematic.

First of all because the concept of a school is not applicable to this group. Because neither the historiographers nor the protagonists of this group themselves agreed on who should belong to this "protected brand" and who not. For example, Alexandre Tansman, who had long refused to be counted as belonging to any artistic group at all, changed his attitude on this point after World War II, when it became time to take a position as an established phalanx of moderate modernists against a new generation of composers of a more radical orientation who were in the process of claiming the resources and positions of musical life for themselves. Furthermore, because it turns the inclusive aspect, which makes the term tolerable in its conceptual vagueness both in application to the art-historical phenomenon described above and as a centuries-long music-historical constant (from Lully to Stravinsky), into its opposite. With this, it loses its meaning, because it disqualifies an enormous number of composers whom it could and should cover, composers who are not included in national musical histories because of their exile status (and because of their Jewish descent) and whose work is characterized precisely by the influence of French

musical culture. And finally, because, beyond the fact of amicable relations between the composers in question, there are hardly any similarities of style or aesthetics – in contrast to the protagonists of the Second Viennese School, for example – that would justify a clear demarcation from other currents by means of such a brand name. Quite revealing in this context is a broadcast by Roland-Manuel on French radio in 1962 on the occasion of the awarding of First Prize to Simon Laks for his Fourth String Quartet at the composition competition of the Quatuor de Liège. As chairman of the jury of this competition, he spoke, after remarks on the “École de Paris,” about the winner of the prize: “This work, whose author was unknown to me, initially imposed itself on me by a kind of necessity as a product marked with the seal of the ‘École de Paris.’ It was a string quartet, whose construction ... betrayed both Slavic nature and French culture. I later found out that I had not been far off. It was Simon Laks...”³³ The chauvinistic notion of a “Slavic nature” that is “cultivated” by a French sense of clarity and refinement is a topos which has pervaded the discourse about the “École de Paris” since the very beginning. But if this were to be a significant defining feature – and since the 1920s Roland-Manuel had been one of the most important figures in French musical life who had contributed to the discourse about the “École de Paris” – then composers such as the Swiss Conrad Beck would have to be excluded, as would the numerous non-French, non-Slavic composers who populated the Parisian music scene in the 1920s and ‘30s.

It is thus not surprising that the uneasiness about using the term “École de Paris” has been part of the discourse from the very beginning. Already in 1951, Claude Rostand spoke of the “phantom of the École de Paris”³⁴ on the occasion of a concert organized and broadcast by French radio on 18 December 1951, with works by Martinů, Beck, Mihalovici, and Harsányi, that is to say. While in 1964 Roland-Manuel cited Laks as proof of the continued existence of the “École de Paris,” thus using the term in a broader sense, Rostand employed it in reference to a piece of Parisian musical history from the time before World War II and associated it with the activities of the “Triton Group.” Triton was founded in 1932 by a circle of musicians in the apartment of Arthur Honegger, with the intention – as Miholivici recalled in a 1954 radio interview – “of promoting the most important chamber music and chamber orchestra works being composed at that time in Europe, in all of Europe.”³⁵ The illustrious Triton group consisted of its initiator Pierre-Octave Ferroud, Arthur Honegger, Jacques Ibert, Darius Milhaud, Jean Rivier, Henri Tomasi, Sergei Prokofiev, Tibor Harsányi, and Marcel Mihalovici – an almost equal distribution of French and foreigners. Triton had nothing more to do with the so-called “École de Paris” than that two of its members were also at Honegger’s that evening. The very composition of the Triton

round makes it clear what incredible creative potential was concentrated in Paris at this time, to what extent French musical culture was enriched by contributions “from outside,” how strong the interactions between dialogizing musical cultures were, and how little the cataloging of Parisian musical life into specific groupings had to do with the actual dynamics of the scene.

The examples of the intensive, cross-generational networking of the protagonists of the Parisian music scene in the interwar period are legion: collaborative editions such as the *Treize Danses*, published by Sirène musicale in 1929, with contributions by Beck, Martinů, Harsányi, Mihalovici, Tansman, Lopatnikoff, Schulhoff, Migot, and Ferroud, among others; the album *À l'Exposition*, published on the occasion of the 1937 World's Fair, with contributions by the members of the “Groupe des Six,” which had long since ceased to appear as a group, who were joined by Ibert, Sauguet, Delannoy, and Schmitt; or the album *Parc d'Attractions Expo 1937*, published on the same occasion, with contributions by Mihalovici, Harsányi, Tcherepnine, Tansman, Ernesto Halffter, Honegger, Mompou, and Rieti; or Ibert and Honegger's jointly composed opera *L'Aiglon* (1937). Ibert would undoubtedly have expanded the “Groupe des Six” into the “Groupe des Sept” had he not been serving as a paramedic during its constituent meeting in 1916. The Swiss Honegger was naturally considered by the friends of the “École de Paris” as one of their own.³⁶ After Honegger's death in 1955, Mihalovici revealed in a letter to Heinrich Strobel that he had “secretly composed only for this musician and friend.”³⁷

If one wants to define the unifying factor that links the works of the protagonists of an “École de Paris” – in the sense of Arthur Hoérée – then it is certainly the *genius loci*. Harsányi summarized this nicely in one of his “causeries” of 1945: “But what one can already discern in these different musical expressions, despite the different nationalities and origins of their authors, is a certain common atmosphere that emanates from each of these works. It is the atmosphere of Paris, it is the life of Paris with its pulsations, and finally, it is the great song of Paris today, which has come down to us through the centuries.”³⁸

The transfer of styles and techniques is a constant in cultural history. Sometimes it went smoothly, sometimes accompanied by debates and aesthetic “wars.” Since the awakening of national and ethnic (self-)consciousness, it has been accompanied on the one hand by the notion of the superiority of one culture over another, on the other hand by the need to protect one's own culture against the influence of the others. The profusion of foreign tongues in interwar Paris aroused anxiety, especially on the part of conservatives, who –

analogous to the polemics against the Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, and Polish painters of the "École de Paris" in the visual arts – feared excessive foreign influence on French musical culture. Correspondingly different is the view of this matter by the participants, and even the attitude of the affected composers could not be more different, depending of course on their origins. For the American composers, Paris was an intermediate stage on the road to a national career at home; the biographies of Antheil, Copland, and Thomson speak for themselves. Antheil had less fear of succumbing to a French influence than no longer being recognized as a fully American composer after ten years in Paris: "I am an American composer, I did not grow up here, but I was born here. Everybody in Europe always said I was very American. Now everybody in America (at least in New York) said I was very European ... I did not wish..., " he wrote alluding to Gershwin, whose Americanism he sought to surpass, "to be a Parisian in New York.... Hemingway had once told me: 'If you don't have the geography, background, you have nothing.'"³⁹

Geography and background are what the composers of Central and Eastern Europe carried in their musical baggage to the art metropolis of Paris, and what they did not allow themselves to be deprived of, as Martinů, asked about his teacher Roussel, said in 1956 in a radio broadcast with the revealing title "Musicians in search of a homeland: emigrants in Europe": "Roussel corrected me in the French manner, you know, to not write too many notes. In terms of my Slavic temperament, he did not correct me, he could not [he laughs]."⁴⁰ In a radio broadcast in 1969, Tcherepnin stressed the special nature of the Parisian milieu in which the national characteristics of foreign composers are not only tolerated, but, on the contrary, can even experience special – exile-contingent – development. The "climate of Paris," he summarized in the conversation with Joëlle Witold, "does not Frenchify them, but rather opens up to them what they carry within themselves and lets them be themselves to the highest degree. I believe that if Chopin had stayed in Poland, he would have been significantly less Polish than he became through Paris."⁴¹ Only the experience of foreign lands makes that which is one's own become transparent, experienceable, and malleable. From a French perspective, André Gide formulated this insight in the impressive *Europa Almanach 1925*, a moving testimony to a transnational dialogue between European artists of all disciplines a few years after the end of World War I: "I think it is a grave error to believe that the less one knows the others, the better one knows one's fatherland. For my part, I can say that I understood France the best, loved it the most in foreign surroundings. Without a certain distance, one cannot judge properly: and therein also lies the need to deny oneself in order to know oneself."⁴²

Roland-Manuel, however, leaves no doubt that behind the supposed tolerance of the Parisian music scene vis à vis foreign artists is hidden hardly more than indifference, a *laissez faire*. In the already quoted radio presentation of Laks's Fourth String Quartet on the occasion of the composition competition of the Quatuor de Liège, for which he was the chairman, he laconically summed up the situation of the "École de Paris" (in the broader sense): "And in our immediate vicinity, this intrepid cohort [of composers] who did not hesitate to share our fate, in a country where music has lived on the margins of culture for three centuries, and which only ever offered foreign musicians the advantage of developing their forces against our resistance. Without us, they would not have been who they were. But without them, French music would certainly not be that what it is."⁴³

With the Nationalist-National Socialist pact in France, the era of an encompassing European-Transatlantic musical culture ended. It hit its Jewish fraction particularly hard. The great "purge" between 1941 and 1944 destroyed all close and loose structures and ties. Parallel to this, new groupings developed to take the place of the old ones. In 1942 Olivier Messiaen, who had just returned from captivity as a prisoner of war, was appointed professor at the Paris Conservatoire. From his class emerged a school that, because of its music-historical significance, can justifiably be called the "École de Paris" of the second half of the twentieth century. In 1954 Pierre Boulez founded the Domaine Musical concert series; in 1970 he opened the IRCAM Paris; and in 1976 he launched Ensemble Intercontemporain – measures that secured Paris a premier place in the world of the musical avant-garde for decades to come.

The more the ideological fog lifts, the more clearly visible becomes the losses on the battlefield of twentieth-century cultural history. Some still find it difficult to see this as anything other than a process of natural selection. The fate of Simon Laks, which inspired us to this digression, stands paradigmatically for this. He went through the double selection process that countless artists of his generation had to go through, in extremis. He survived the first because he was a musician. The second he did not survive because he wrote the wrong music. But the growing interest in his work and in his biography shows that the last word about the history of music has not yet been spoken.

Translation: Howard Weiner

- 1 The majority of the Jewish painters of the “École de Paris” became victims of the Shoah. In 1951 Hersh Fenster’s heartrending publication *Undzere farpaynikte kinstler* (*Our Tormented Artists*) was issued in Paris in Yiddish in a print run of only 375 copies. The book documents the lives and work of eighty-four Eastern European artists working in Paris, who were murdered in the Nazi extermination and concentration camps. It was reissued in a French translation only in 2021.
- 2 Concerning the problem of the school concept and of the alleged hegemony of German music in the context of European musical history since the Middle Ages, see Wolfgang Dömling’s essay “Zum Beispiel Neudeutsch – wieso eigentlich Schule?” in *Liszt und Europa*, edited by Detlef Altenburg and Harriet Oelers, Weimarer Liszt-Studien 5 (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2008).
- 3 Schoenberg in 1921 in a letter to his assistant Josef Rufer.
- 4 See, for example, the CDs *L’École de Paris*, works by Tansman, Harsányi, Martinů; Kammerensemble de Paris, Armin Jordan, Gallo, 1995; *Le violoncelle à l’École de Paris*, works by Tansman, Harsányi, Martinů; Wenn-Sin Yang/Oliver Triendl, Oehms Classics 2021; and *Viola à l’École de Paris*, works by Tcherpnin, Mihalovici, Tansman, Martinů, Harsányi; Diyang Mei/Oliver Triendl, CAvi-music 2022.
- 5 Federico Lazzaro, *Écoles de Paris en Musique 1920–1950* (Paris, 2018).
- 6 “De tous nos compositeurs, Jacques Ibert est certainement le plus authentiquement français. Il est aussi le chef incontesté de notre école contemporaine... L’art de Jacques Ibert échappe à l’épreuve du temps car il est, avant toute choses, essentiellement classique de forme.” Henri Dutilleul, *Jeunesses musicales de France*, 15 février 1945, in: Gérard Michel, *Jacques Ibert, L’homme et son œuvre*, Paris 1967, p. 160
- 7 “J’admets l’atonalité et la polytonalité à condition de ne pas en devenir la victime, c’est-à-dire de ne pas en faire un système clos. Je les emploie quand je sens leur nécessité et leur utilité, mais jamais arbitrairement,” Gérard Michel, *Jacques Ibert, L’homme et son œuvre*, Paris 1967, S. 160, pp. 48/49
- 8 Tibor Harsányi, *École de Paris, 5e causerie*, 1947, broadcast script; Lazzaro, p. 346.
- 9 “La Sirène musicale poursuit sa croisade en faveur de la jeune musique. J’allais écrire: en faveur de la jeune musique française. Il faut dire: de la jeune musique de l’école de Paris, visant ainsi cette pléiade de remarquables jeunes talents où se coudoient des Français mais aussi des étrangers qui ont choisi Paris pour centre et participent de sa tendance tout en gardant leur caractère national,” cited after Lazzaro, p. 73.
- 10 See Lukas Näf, *Music always wins, Marcel Mihalovici und Samuel Becket*, Zürich 2008, p. 234
- 11 George Antheil, *Bad Boy of Music* (BBM) (London, 1949), p. 209.
- 12 BBM, p. 80.
- 13 BBM, p. 80.
- 14 Letter to M. L. Bok, February/March 1923, cited after Linda Whitesitt, *The Life and Music of George Antheil, 1900–1959* (Ann Arbor, 1983), p. 7
- 15 Letter to M. L. Bok, presumably April 1923; Whitesitt, p. 9.
- 16 BBM, p. 77.
- 17 BBM, p. 433.
- 18 George Antheil, *Musical Neofism 1923*, typescript, Antheil Estate; Whitesitt p. 69.
- 19 Fernand Léger, “Sehr aktuell sein,” *Europa Almanach 1925* (Potsdam, 1925), p. 16.
- 20 BBM, p. 156.
- 21 A project with Joyce – the setting of the Cyclops episode from *Ulysses* – in which the array of mechanical pianos and percussion of the *Ballet mécanique* was to be surpassed, did not proceed beyond first drafts.
- 22 The invention was submitted for a patent; however, the US Navy did not employ it. It was realized only decades later in the Bluetooth technology.
- 23 Whitesitt, p. 30.
- 24 Letter from Antheil to Bok, August 1922; Whitesitt, p. 286.
- 25 “Il semble parfois que la pensée polonaise ait besoin, pour s’épanouir, de l’exil de la France.” Alexandre Tansman in an interview with José Bruyr, *L’écran*, 1929; Lazzaro, p.162.
- 26 From a conversation between Simon Laks and Tadeusz Kaczynski, *Ruch Muzyczny* (The Musical Movement), no. 21, September 1964.
- 27 Vaclav Fiala, “Karol Szymanowski über die moderne Musik. Aus einem Gespräch mit dem Komponisten,”

Prager Presse, 3 May 1927.

- 28 Veau à cinq pattes: expression for something exceptional, something that cannot actually exist, that astonishes or shocks ordinary mortals.
- 29 Henri Jaton, *Tribune de Lausanne*, 3 July 1964, Archive André Laks, Paris.
- 30 Laks gives the listener a means of orientation, in order to take him away from safe ground into unknown terrain. The thematic-harmonic material of the second movement, for example, is ultra-chromatic, quasi-permanent twelve-tone, without one experiencing the loss of a harmonic center – in the 1964 interview with Tadeusz Kaczynski, Laks describes this phenomenon with the term “tonicity” coined by Szymanowski as a third way between tonality and atonality/dodecaphony.
- 31 See Frank Harders-Wuthenow, “Verarbeitung oder Sublimierung. Holocaust-Reflexion in Opern von Mieczysław Weinberg, André Tchaikowsky, Szymon Laks und Tadeusz Zygfryd Kassern,” in *Verfolgte Musiker im nationalsozialistischen Thüringen. Eine Spurensuche*, ed. by Helen Geyer and Maria Stolarzewicz, Cologne 2020.
- 32 “Car Paris sait offrir aux artistes un prodigieux instinct de l'équilibre, de la clarté, de la finesse, sans jamais rien leur enlever de ce qu'ils possèdent de personnel.” Alexandre Tansman, *Autoportrait*, 1967; Lazzaro, p. 177.
- 33 “Cette œuvre dont l'auteur m'était inconnu s'imposa d'abord à moi par une sorte de nécessité comme un produit marqué du signe de l'“École de Paris.” C'était un quatuor à cordes, dont la facture ... trahissait à la fois la nature slave et la culture française. J'ai su par la suite que je ne m'étais pas beaucoup trompé. Il s'agit de Simon Laks....” Transcription of the recording of the broadcast. Archive André Laks, Paris.
- 34 Claude Rostand, *Le Fantôme de l'École de Paris*, Carrefour 1951, Lazzaro, p. 195.
- 35 “Nous avons senti la nécessité de former ici un groupe de musiciens qui fasse connaître les œuvres de musique de chambre et d'orchestre de chambre les plus importantes qu'on écrivait à cette époque-là en Europe, dans toute l'Europe,” George Charbonnier and Marcel Mihalovici, in: *Dialogues et Musiques*, no. 30, émission radiophonique, RTF, Chaîne nationale, diffusée le 20 octobre 1954; Lazzaro, p. 201.
- 36 “Honegger qui nous joignait aussi – il faisait double emploi chez les Six et chez nous.” (“Honegger also joined us – he was doing double duty, with the Six and with us.”) Joëlle Witold and Alexandre Tchérépine, *La musique et les hommes*, ORTF, 26 February 1969; Lazzaro, p. 207.
- 37 Letter from Mihalovici to Heinrich Strobel, 29 January 1956, Archive of the SWR, cited after Näf, *Music allways wins*, p. 240.
- 38 “Mais ce qu'on peut pourra discerner dès aujourd'hui dans ces différentes expressions musicales malgré la nationalité et l'origine différentes de leurs auteurs, c'est une certaine atmosphère commune (se) dégageant de chacune de ces œuvres. C'est l'atmosphère de Paris, c'est la vie de Paris avec ses pulsations, et enfin, c'est le grand chant de Paris d'aujourd'hui, arrivé jusqu'à nous à travers les siècles.” Tibor Harsányi, *L'École de Paris à travers l'histoire*, 5e causerie, 2 May 1945; Lazzaro, pp. 339–340.
- 39 George Antheil, *BBM*. citation, p. 298.
- 40 “Roussel m'a corrigé de façon française, vous savez, ne pas faire beaucoup de notes. Il m'a pas corrigé si j'avais de tempérament slave, parce que ça il pouvait pas [il rit].” This interview, which Henri Jaton conducted with Martinů for Swiss Radio, was partially printed in Luc Terrapon, *Musiciens en quête d'une Patrie: Émigrés en Europe*; Lazzaro, p. 206.
- 41 “Ils ne les francisent pas, mais il leur ouvre ce qu'ils ont eux-mêmes et leur démontre à être eux-mêmes au plus grand degré. Alors je crois que si Chopin était resté en Pologne il serait beaucoup moins polonais qu'il l'est devenu en venant à Paris.” Joëlle Witold, Alexandre Tchérépine, *La musique et les hommes*, ORTF, 26 February 1969, cited after Lazzaro, p. 207.
- 42 André Gide, *Europa Almanach 1925*, Potsdam, 1925; p. 25.
- 43 “Et tout près de nous cette cohorte téméraire qui n'hésite pas à partager notre sort dans un pays où la musique vit depuis trois siècles en marge de la culture et qui n'offre traditionnellement aux musiciens étrangers que l'avantage de développer leurs forces à notre résistance. Sans nous ils n'auraient pas été ceux qu'ils furent. Mais sans eux la musique française ne serait certainement pas ce qu'elle est.” Roland-Manuel, presentation of the Fourth String Quartet of Simon Laks, Archive André Laks, Paris.